

Message Text

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11

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 HEW-06 AID-05 /083 W
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R 301300Z JAN 75

FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4366
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

UNCLAS CAPE TOWN 0124

E.9.11652:N/A

TAGS :SOCI,PINT,SF

SUBJ :NICO MALAN SEGREGATION TO BE LIFTED

1. OM JANUARY 29 ADMINISTRATOR VOSLOO OF THE CAPE PROVINCE ANNOUNCED THAT FOLLOWING PRIME MINISTER'S MEETING WITH LIAISON COMMITTEE OF COLOURED PERSONS REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL (CRC) (CAPE TOWN 0097) HE HAD DECIDED ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE, AFTER CONSULTATION WITH THE CAPE PERFORMING ARTS BOARD (CAPAB), TO ACCOMMODATE 'OTHER POPULATIONS GROUPS' AT THE NICO MALAN THEATER COMPLEX IN CAPE TOWN.

2. IT IS UNCLEAR AT THIS POINT JUST WHAT ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE MADE, BUT IT APPEARS THAT THE LAYOUT OF THE BUILDING DOES NOT READILY LEND ITSELF TO SEGREGATION OF AUDIENCES.

3. CAPE TIMES EDITORIALIZED 'IF WE HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE ADMINISTRATOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT CORRECTLY, THE NATIONALIST GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN DIRECTION. LET US HOPE WE READ THE SIGNS RIGHT.

4. COMMENT: EXCLUSION OF NON-WHITES FROM NICO MALAN, BUILT WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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TAXPAYERS' MONEY, HAS BEEN A MATTER OF BITTER CONTROVERSY.

IN ADDITION, TO NON-WHITES WHO CANNOT GO, MANY LIBERAL WHITES HAVE BOYCOTTED IT. ADMINISTRATOR'S ANNOUNCEMENT IS IN STRIKING CONTRAST TO HIS POSITION, PUBLICLY EXPRESSED AS RECENTLY AS LAST NOVEMBER WHEN HE SCOTCHED RUMORS THAT NICO MALAN WOULD BE OPEN TO ALL. IT IS CLEAR THAT NEW DECISION COMES FROM HIGHEST GOVERNMENT LEVEL. IT APPARENTLY REFLECTS PRIME MINISTER'S UNDERTAKING TO COLORED LIAISON COMMITTEE ON JANUARY 23 TO WORK TOWARD ELIMINATION OF RACIALLY DISCRIMINATORY MEASURES 'THAT SERVE NO PURPOSE'. BECAUSE THE NICO MALAN HAS BEEN SUCH AN EMOTIONAL ISSUE IN THE CAPE, ITS DESEGREGATION WILL BE REGARDED BY MANY IN THIS AREA AS A MAJOR STEP IN IMPROVING RACE RELATIONS. HOWEVER, ITS TRUE SIGNIFICANCE WILL DEPEND ON A NUMBER OF FACTORS. WILL IT BE TOTALLY INTEGRATED OR WILL INTEGRATION BE ON A LIMITED OR TOKEN BASIS? MORE IMPORTANT THOUGH IS THAT THE OPENING OF THE NICO MALAN TO BLACKS IS BY ITSELF OF MINOR CONSEQUENCE IN RELATION TO THE TOTALITY OF THE DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES OF APARTHEID. IT WILL MAKE NO REAL DIFFERENCE TO MOST CAPE COLOREDS. MUCH LESS TO BLACKS ELSEWHERE IN THE COUNTRY UNLESS IT IS A HARBINGER OF MORE MEANINGFUL CHANGES. AS THE CAPE TIMES SAYS: 'IF IT IS NOW THROWN OPEN, WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED, THIS WILL BE AN EXCELLENT BEGINNING, BUT ONLY A BEGINNING, ON THE ROAD TO A HAPPIER SOCIETY.'

GAMON

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